Opportunities and Action

Transforming Supports in Ontario For People Who Have a Developmental Disability

Guide to Consultation Questions

Ministry of Community and Social Services

May 2006

Ontario

Tell Us What You Think

The Ministry of Community and Social Services wants to hear your ideas about how best to support people in Ontario who have a developmental disability.

Over the past 18 months, we have been speaking with and listening to individuals with a developmental disability, their families, and groups that provide services and support to them. Using what we have learned, we have developed plans to change how supports are provided. From these discussions, we also identified additional areas where more thought needs to be given to what support is provided and how it's provided. We are now seeking your views on these additional needs.

For more information, see Opportunities and Action - Transforming Supports in Ontario For People Who Have a Developmental Disability, the full consultation paper, available on the Ministry of Community and Social Services' website at www.mcss.gov.on.ca

or to obtain a copy, call (416) 327-4954
or toll free 1-866-340-8881.

Read on to find out:

- What changes are already planned
- What additional needs we are looking at
- How you can influence what happens by answering the questions in this discussion guide.

To provide your feedback electronically:
visit our website at www.mcss.gov.on.ca and click on "Transforming Developmental Services".

Or e-mail us at:
dstransformation.mcss@css.gov.on.ca

Or fax your answers to the questions in this guide to:
(416) 325-5554
or toll-free to 1-866-340-9112,

Or mail to:
Developmental Services Transformation Feedback
Developmental Services Branch
Ministry of Community and Social Services
4th Floor, 80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario
M7A 1E9

Please send your answers by June 30, 2006.

What Changes Are Already Planned

Using what we have already learned, we have developed a plan to:

- Provide assistance to individuals who have a developmental disability and their families in creating a personal plan that describes what type of support they want and need, and how they will go about getting this support
- Be clearer on who is eligible for developmental supports and services provided by the ministry
- Be clearer on what supports are eligible for government funding
- Make sure that in Ontario, people with similar needs receive similar levels of support through a common application process, common standards, and common criteria for making equitable funding decisions
- Make it easier for people to find out what support is available and to arrange to receive support
- Allow individuals and families to choose to receive government funds to purchase their own supports, and to allow funding to be "portable."

Additional Needs Being Explored

In these discussions, people also asked us to look more closely at seven areas in which changes are needed to what supports are provided and/or how they are provided. This section summarizes those needs. The next section asks for your views on them.

Support for Inclusion and Community Engagement

Individuals, families, agencies, and government need to work together to strengthen the voice of people who have a developmental disability – and make it easier for them to participate fully as citizens in their communities.

Respite for Caregivers

There are good supports available now (called "respite" supports) to give families brief breaks from caring for an individual who has a developmental disability. But the system is very complicated and could be made simpler and more effective.

Partnerships with Families on Residential Supports

We need to explore how ministries and families can best collaborate to support individuals' living arrangements outside the family home. For example, some families may wish to use their own resources to provide a home for a family member outside the family home. We also need to work to remove some of the barriers that currently exist. There may be other, innovative options – perhaps involving partnerships among governments and voluntary organizations.

Transition across Life Stages

Examples of "life transitions" are when a young person leaves school or when an adult becomes a senior citizen. Making the adjustment to different support needs and different sources of support can be difficult. We need to find better ways to help individuals and families plan for these transitions in advance, and make them successfully.

Supports for People with Specialized Needs

Special supports, beyond those available through community mental health and counselling services, are needed when people who have a developmental disability face mental health and/or behaviour issues. The ministry has recently put special supports in place for these individuals (called "specialized services"), but there are still gaps between what is needed and what is provided.

Taxes, Wills, Disability Savings Plans

While all parents have a legal responsibility to support their children until they turn 18, many parents who have a family member with a disability continue to provide financial support throughout their adult years. Instead of contributing towards university tuition costs, as they might for a son or daughter who does not have a disability, one parent may stay out of the workforce to provide support at home and to provide transportation to work or volunteer activities in the community. There is an opportunity to get the provincial and federal tax systems working together more effectively to help address the additional financial costs faced by caregivers. This includes exploring the possibility of creating a registered savings plan for people with disabilities (similar to registered education savings plans). Families are also looking for changes in how they can use wills and trust funds to support a family member.

Quality Supports and Services

There is an opportunity to involve people receiving supports and services and their families in setting acceptable quality standards, and developing ways to improve the quality of services and supports provided to them.

Guide to Consultation Questions

The following consultation questions provide an opportunity for all Ontarians to express their views about the proposed changes to supports for people with a developmental disability. We want to hear from you. The following questions correspond to the topics found in section 1 of Opportunities and Action. You may wish to answer the questions that are provided or write additional comments or ideas.

Anyone who has an interest in how funding and supports are provided to people who have a developmental disability is encouraged to participate in this process, either as an individual or as part of a group or organization.

Please provide the following information:

Required information:

1. First three characters of your postal code _____

Optional information:

2. Are you .... (Please check as many as apply):

- ☐ A person with a developmental disability
- ☐ The parent of a son or daughter with a developmental disability
- ☐ Another family member
- ☐ A friend, neighbour, or member of faith or church community
- ☐ A service provider: If so, please check:
  - ☐ Front-line staff
  - ☐ Management staff
  - ☐ Board member
- ☐ Community member at large (e.g. service club, faith-based organization, teacher, health care professional, etc.)
- ☐ Other: _____

For the person with a developmental disability (or, if you are an individual listed above who is representing someone with a developmental disability) please complete the following questions:

3. Do you/does the person with a developmental disability live with your parent(s) and/or brother(s) and sister(s)?

☐ Yes ☐ No

4. Do you currently receive supports funded by the Ministry of Community and Social Services?

☐ Yes ☐ No

5. If yes, which of the following supports are received (please check all that apply)?

☐ Residential (e.g. Group Home, Supported Independent Living)

☐ Special Services At Home

☐ Community Participation Supports (e.g., supported employment, day supports)

6. Are you/is the person on a waiting list(s) for supports?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, for which of the following supports (please check all that apply)?

☐ Residential (e.g. Group Home, Supported Independent Living)

☐ Special Services At Home

☐ Community Participation Supports (e.g., supported employment, day supports)

7. Gender of the person with a developmental disability:

☐ Male ☐ Female

8. Age of the person with a developmental disability:

☐ Less than 18 years ☐ 46 to 64 years

☐ 19 to 30 years ☐ 65+ years

☐ 31 to 45 years

1.1 Support for Inclusion and Community Engagement

Individuals, families, agencies and government need to work together to strengthen the voice of people who have a developmental disability – and make it easier for them to participate fully as citizens in their communities.

Key Questions

1a. What makes it hard for a person with a developmental disability to be active and included in the community?

1b. What would make it easier to be active and included? Who can make these changes happen and how might they go about it?

Optional Detailed Questions

1c. What do you see as the role of the various players in making it easier for people to be included in their community? Think about:

- Individuals who have a developmental disability
- Their families
- Agencies who support people who have a developmental disability
- Other community organizations (voluntary organizations, schools, business, faith/culture organizations)
- Governments (federal, provincial, municipal)

1d. Do you know of any examples of successful partnerships among some or all of these players that others could learn from? Please describe what is happening and what makes it work.

1e. Are there particular cultural considerations that you know about that will need to be addressed appropriately in plans for including people fully in the community?

1.2 Respite for Caregivers

There are good supports available now (called "respite" supports) to give families brief breaks from caring for an individual who has a developmental disability. But the system is very complicated and could be made simpler and more effective.

Key Questions

2a. What types of relief ("respite") from caregiving responsibilities are most needed by families?

2b. What would you like to see in the "best possible" system of family relief? What would be offered? How would it work?

Optional Detailed Questions

2c. What currently prevents families from getting the relief they need? How would you suggest that these challenges be overcome?

2d. Are there special needs – emergency situations, for example – that require something different from the standard respite approach? What is different and how can these needs be met?

1.3 Partnerships with Families on Residential Supports

We need to explore how ministries and families can best collaborate to support individuals' living arrangements outside the family home. For example, some families may wish to use their own resources to provide a home for a family member outside the family home. We also need to work to remove some of the barriers that currently exist. There may be other, innovative options – perhaps involving partnerships among governments and voluntary organizations.

Key Questions

3a. What can the ministry do to better support individual choice of how and where to live – within or outside of existing ministry-supported arrangements?

3b. Do you know of any examples of successful partnerships among families, agencies, community groups and government in creating new kinds of living arrangements? Please describe what is happening and what makes it work.

Optional Detailed Questions

3c. What barriers must be removed or incentives provided to individuals, families or agencies to encourage the creation of innovative residential options? (Think about funding, legislation, social assistance or other programs)

3d. What supports need to be in place to help protect the safety and security of vulnerable people living on their own?

3e. What improvements could be made to existing choices?

- Group homes?
- Supported independent living?
- The Familyhome program?

1.4 Transition across Life Stages

Examples of life transitions are when a young person leaves school or when an adult becomes a senior citizen. Making the adjustment to different support needs and different sources of support can be difficult. We need to find better ways to help individuals and families plan for these transitions in advance, and make them successfully.

Key Questions

4a. What information and support would be of most help to individuals and families as they plan for the transition from school to adult supports?

4b. What programs and supports need to be in place for seniors who have a developmental disability?

Optional Detailed Questions

4c. Who should be involved in planning transitions from school to adult support?

4d. What existing services for seniors are available to people with a developmental disability (whether they live with family, on their own or in government-funded residential supports)?

4e. Do you know of any examples of successful partnerships among individuals, families, schools, community organizations and governments to support life transitions that others could learn from? Please describe what is happening and what makes it work.

1.5 Supports for People with Specialized Needs

Special supports, beyond those available through community mental health and counselling services, are needed when people who have a developmental disability face mental health and/or behaviour issues. The ministry has recently put special supports in place for these individuals (called specialized services), but there are still gaps between what is needed and what is provided.

Key Questions

5a. What are the gaps between what is required by people with specialized needs and what is provided?

5b. What suggestions do you have as to how best to close these gaps?

Optional Detailed Question

5c. How can the specialized services recently introduced by the ministry best work together with the core service system?

1.6 Taxes, Wills, Disability Savings Plans

While all parents have a legal responsibility to support their children until they turn 18, many parents who have a family member with a developmental disability continue to provide financial support throughout their adult years. Instead of contributing towards university tuition costs, as they might for a son or daughter who does not have a disability, one parent may stay out of the workforce to provide support at home and to provide transportation to work or volunteer activities in the community. There is an opportunity to get the provincial and federal tax systems working together more effectively to help address the additional financial costs faced by caregivers. This includes exploring the possibility of creating a registered savings plan for people with disabilities (similar to registered education savings plans). Families are also looking for changes in how they can use wills and trust funds to support a family member.

Key Questions

6a. What changes are needed to help families cope financially as they care at home for their family member with a disability?

6b. What changes would help families who want to make long-term plans to support their family members with a disability?

Optional Detailed Question

6c. What are the best ways to get people the information they need about wills, trusts and other plans to support their family member with a disability?

1.7 Quality Supports and Services

There is an opportunity to involve people receiving supports and services and their families in setting acceptable quality standards, and developing ways to improve the quality of services and supports provided to them.

Key Questions

7a. What role should individuals and their families play in setting quality standards for supports delivered by agencies, and for supports purchased elsewhere?

7b. How can individuals and their families contribute to the continual improvement of the quality of services and supports provided?

Optional Detailed Question

7c. What needs to be put in place to monitor the quality of supports and services provided to individuals and their families (through agencies, or purchased directly from elsewhere) against agreed standards?

What Else Would You Like to Say?

Is there anything else you would like to say about the services and supports provided to individuals with a developmental disability and their families that you have not already said?

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